Attendance Policy

Olympus

Reviewed by:	Headteacher	Date: September 2024
Approved by:	MD Education Services	Date: September 2024
Next review due by:	September 2025	
Policy ref: OPED06		
Version: 4		

Contents

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

> Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

> Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

> Acting early to address patterns of absence

> Providing a broad and exciting curriculum that endeavours to utilise an individual's strengths and interests so that they engage with education

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

> Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

> Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

> Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

> The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

> The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Directors

Directors are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. They also hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at the school

> Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to directors

> Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The pastoral lead & Attendance lead

> Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher

> Works with education welfare officers, where applicable, to tackle persistent absence

> Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

> Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School office staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances Any amendment to the attendance

register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.10am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.20pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

If a pupil is absent, the parent/carer is expected to:

1. Notify the school by telephone before the start of the school day, providing a reason for their child's absence.
2. Inform their transport provider.
3. Provide an expected return date.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

> Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

> After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

> Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by calling or sending a text message and/ or email to them on the first day of absence

> Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents termly in the written end-of-year report. Where a child's attendance falls below 90%, the parents/carer will be sent an additional letter of concern.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English, and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Unauthorised absence will be targeted via a variety of strategies e.g., phone calls and letters home, pastoral support meetings, attendance improvement plans and referrals to external agencies.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

> Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Identified pupils with specific medical, therapy or special educational needs, who have a high level of absence, will be supported by the following strategies:

> Weekly monitoring of attendance and absence

> Keep in regular contact with parents/carers

> Provide home visits where appropriate.

> Recognise that some pupils are not 'available for learning' and work with the Local Authority and other agencies to allocate appropriate provision which may not be within our school.

> A range of rewards and incentive initiatives

7. Part time timetables

All young people admitted to the school are entitled to receive a full-time education. However, school attendance guidance from the DfE states that in very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. Where this is the case, the following must be in place:

> A clear transition plan to re-integrate the young person back into school on a full-time basis, including an end date for the part time timetable.

> Agreement from the funding LA and parents that the part time timetable is in the best interests of the young person.

> A risk assessment to identify the risks to the young person whilst they are not in school, along with identified control measures to mitigate these risks.

8. Attendance monitoring

The Attendance lead at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

The parent/carer is expected to call the school each day their child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 7 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

We collect and store attendance data in weekly reports to the directors. It may be used for internal purposes. For example, to:

> Track the attendance of individual pupils

> Monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support

.

9. Approval

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by directors.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

> Behaviour policy
> Child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes
The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
K	Education provision provided by LA	Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school, or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Other Authorised Absence	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Other Authorised Absence	Pupils on part-time timetables

J1	Interview	Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.
I01	Illness	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for students absent due to non-coronavirus related illness (unless the truthfulness of the claim is in question). This code should not be used for medical or dental appointments.
I02	Confirmed case of Covid-19	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for pupils who have a confirmed case of coronavirus.
The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.

O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.
These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.		
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
Y1	Unable to attend	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available.
Y2	Unable to attend	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend	Part of school closed.
Y4	Unable to attend	Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures).
Y5	Unable to attend	Pupils in the criminal justice system.
Y6	Unable to attend	Absence due to public health guidance or law.
Y7	Unable to attend	Any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.